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DEVELOPING AND LAUNCHING A MENTORING PROGRAM







This “Developing and Launching a Mentoring Program” Guide is a product of EPA’s Workforce Development Strategy. The Strategy is an initiative of the Office of Administration and Resources Management, working in partnership with EPA’s Human Resources Council. One of OARM’s key priorities is “preparing EPA for future challenges by building the skills of its people while fostering diversity.” During the last several years, EPA has emphasized the individual development of all employees within the agency. It is essential to provide EPA staff with important information so they can continue to enhance their personal and professional skills.

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Mentoring

Mentoring is a relationship between two individuals (the mentor and protégé) that focuses on a conversational process of intense learning and growth, whereby the protégé is able to clarify developmental goals, develop an action plan, and achieve success by building his or her own competence to recognize and solve problems.



Traditionally, mentors are typically senior managers. They have used their organizational knowledge, power and experience to personally advise, counsel, coach, guide career development, and sponsor promotion for their protégés. Today the role of a mentor has broadened. A mentor is someone who has the professional and personal competence to pass on knowledge and skill through example, personal authority, and dialogue. Mentors help; protégés do.

Mentoring, particularly face-to-face, is one of the most effective ways to develop others or be developed. Virtually all successful leaders acknowledge one or more mentors as an important factor in their career development and success.

Starting on page 2 you will find suggested steps for developing and launching a Mentoring Program at your location.



- **Research options for a mentoring program.**

Contact other EPA offices (see page 6), other public and private-sector agencies, and consultants for information about mentoring programs. Also consult reference materials such as those listed under Suggested Readings on page 7.

- **Gather a small group to articulate the need for a mentoring program.**

Get a few interested staff members together to brainstorm reasons to develop a mentoring program. Think about benefits at an organizational, professional, and personal level. Determine and articulate how your organization will most benefit from a mentoring program.

- **Find a senior leader to champion and support this work.**

Make your case to a senior leader in your organization. This person can help you get the attention of the organization and support for the time and resources needed to develop and sustain a mentoring program.

- **Assess your organization's readiness and determine at what level to mentor.**

Get the word out that a mentoring program could be in the works if interest is there. Have an informational meeting for the entire organization and/or talk to small groups of staff and supervisors. Determine the interest level and the most interested groups. If people are not interested in taking responsibility for their own professional development, you probably won't succeed. You may want to provide mentoring to only a select group such as aspiring leaders or newer employees, or you may want a program open to staff members.

- **Create a Mentoring Program Design Committee.**

Solicit interested staff to volunteer to help develop your mentoring program. Also, at this time, seek an Executive Sponsor who can help support your efforts and work with his/her senior colleagues to help launch the program. The Sponsor may be your Senior Leader Champion or another Executive Team member.

- **Decide on goals for the program and how to evaluate those goals.**

You have to know what success means for your mentoring program. Set goals for success that are reasonable and measurable. Determine how you will measure success.

- **Develop a plan, schedule, and estimate of resources needed.**

A focused, intentional program plan, including schedule and resource identification, is essential to obtain support from organizational leadership. Most mentoring programs cost little; however, some resources are necessary (e. g., money for training, publications, videos, and, perhaps, travel). Look for opportunities to share resources with other mentoring programs both inside and outside EPA. Don't forget to include the time involved in developing and maintaining a mentoring program when calculating resources. Also, think about how you will sustain your program over the long term. Keeping the program simple and easy to administer will help contribute to its long-term success. Have staff members involved from different parts of the organization to better represent your overall organization and ensure that each office is invested in the program. Consider how to pair mentors and protégés (mentorees).



- **Get the support of management and a resource commitment.**

Present your Mentoring Program plan and highlight the benefits to the organization — senior leaders, the management team, and the individual staff members. Clearly articulate the proposed program structure and the resources needed and how they will be used. Be specific about what support your program needs from the organization's leadership/key others.

- **Develop a marketing plan and any informational materials.**

The marketing plan is the primary tool to attract participants and obtain support from the organization. Include short, concise informational materials (e. g., brochures and posters) as well as more detailed information (e. g., a written proposal) to provide information for a variety of interest levels. Also consider presenting information about the program through an organization-wide open house or through presentations to small groups.

- **Develop a training plan for ALL participants.**

Most participants can benefit from some training to learn how to get and give the most as a mentor or protégé. Valuable skills can include: active listening, asking powerful questions, giving and receiving constructive feedback, building relationships, and goal setting.

- **Present an introduction to the program.**

Offer an overview of the program to all interested staff and managers. This introduction will let you market the program and explain the benefits of participation. Consider using an “infomercial” approach: give information about mentoring — what it is and is not, the power of mentoring, and “What’s in it for me?” Use testimonials from staff who have participated in mentoring both formally and informally. Be prepared to answer questions about the intent and design of your program.

- **Launch the program with an orientation session.**

It is important that all mentor and protégé pairs attend an orientation session where they will learn how to define roles and responsibilities, develop a mentoring partnership agreement, and build an effective relationship. The orientation session may also provide the first introduction for the mentor and protégé if the pair was matched by your Mentoring Committee. Identify any available developmental materials and resources. Announce an ending point for the program and explain that participants are expected to evaluate the program.



- **Celebrate your mentoring program's success/ evaluate its effectiveness**

Plan an ending event where mentors, protégés, Program Champion and/or Sponsor, and the Mentoring Committee can celebrate Program conclusion, lessons learned and success. Also take time to evaluate the Program's effectiveness. This can be done by obtaining individual or group feedback through surveys, individual interviews, or focus groups. If you choose focus groups, consider separate sessions for mentors and protégés. Learn from your Mentoring Program experiences — get ready to begin another Program.



Some EPA colleagues who have had experience with Mentoring Programs include:

R1	Joann Muniz	617-918-1187
	Susan Walter	617-918-1447
R2	Alan Sommerman	212-637-3557
R3	Roseann Deal	215-814-2996
	Nan Ides	215-814-5546
R7	Jan Tarpey	913-551-7223
R8	Chris Lehnertz	303-312-6896
R10	Kellie Kubena	206-553-1904
	Kathy Ivy	206-553-0040
HQ	Sharon Ridings	202-564-7584
	Brian Twillman	202-564-0583
	Jerome King	202-564-7429
	Rosyletta (Roz) Simms	202-564-7897
	Mary Louise Hewlett	202-564-8264
	Carolyn Scott	202-564-8269

Please feel free to contact those colleagues listed above if you are thinking about developing or re-establishing a Mentoring Program at your location.



A Mentor's Companion by L. Ambrose, 1998

Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring: How to Facilitate an Effective Mentoring Program by Margo Murray and Marna A. Owen, 1991

Making the Most of Being Mentored: How to Grow from a Mentoring Partnership, 1998 and Mentoring, A Practical Guide: How to Develop Successful Mentor Behaviors, 1992 by Gordon F. Shea

Managers as Mentors: Building Partnerships for Learning by C. R. Bell, 1996

Mentoring for Exceptional Performance by Harold E. Johnson, 1997

"Reframing Mentoring" by B. Kaye and B. Jacobson, *Training and Development*, Vol. 50, 1996

The Mentee's Guide to Mentoring by M. H. Cohen, 1999

Websites: www.peer.ca/mentor.html, Ask Jeaves, etc.





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***Management Development Project
Workforce Development Strategy***

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